DC
DARK MOON RISING
BATMAN
& The MONSTER MEN
NO. 2
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MATT
WAGNER
dccomics.com

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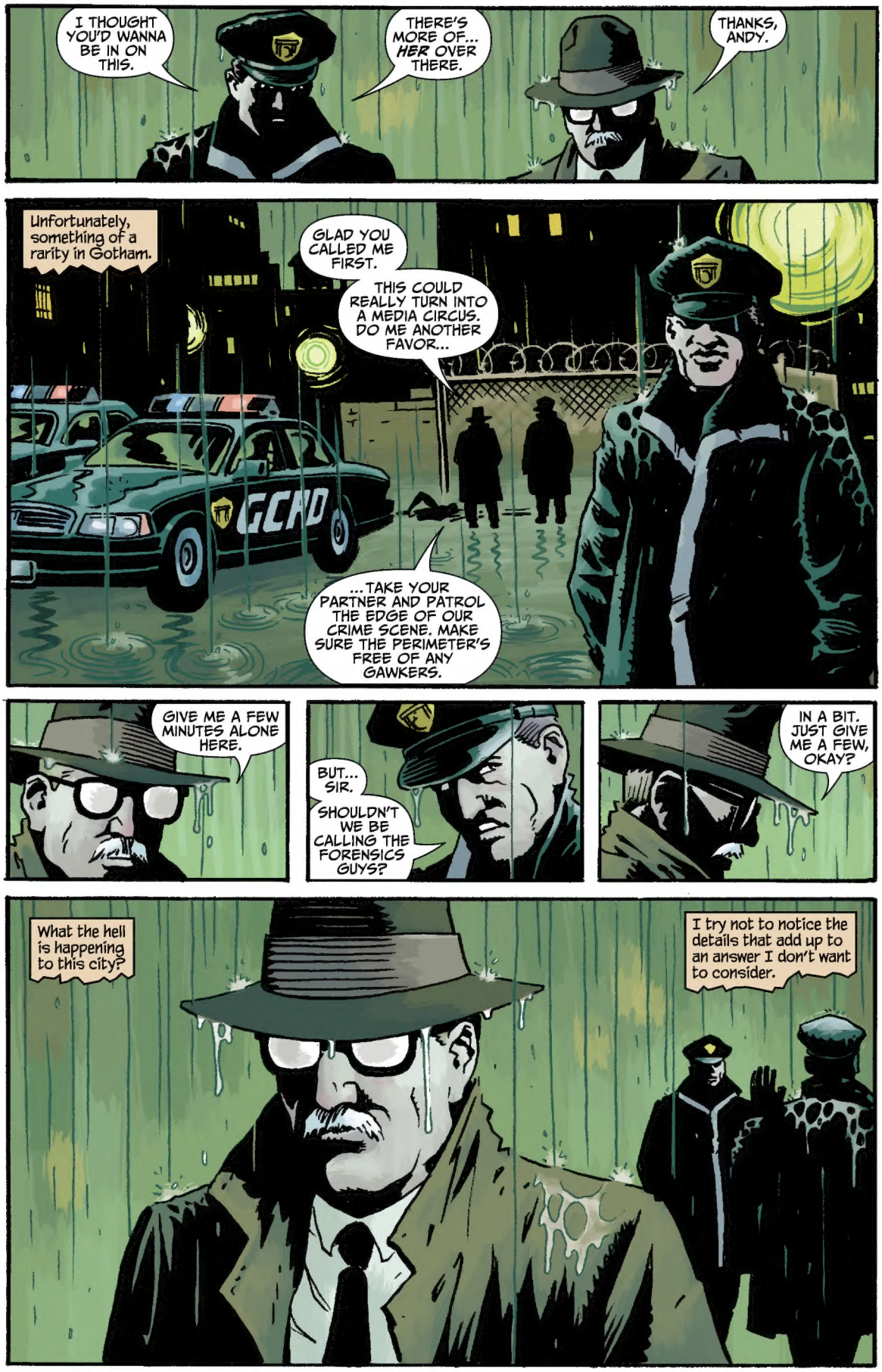
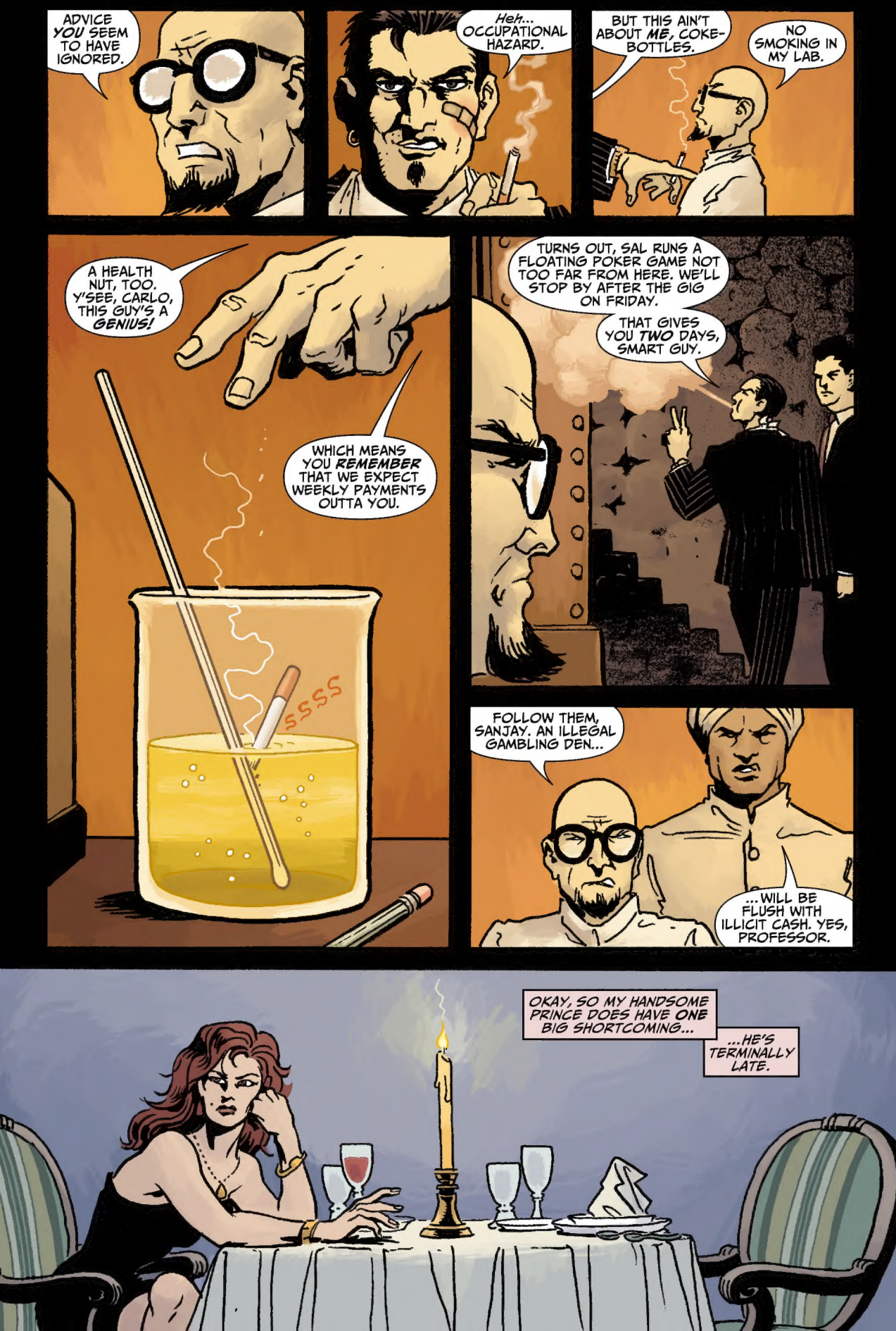
BATMAN CREATED BY
BOB KANE
The call comes in from Reynolds. He's a good cop, honest and dedicated.
SANITATION GUYS PULLED IT UP OUTTA THE SEWERS... UM... HER.


I THOUGHT YOU'D WANNA BE IN ON THIS.
THERE'S MORE OF... HER OVER THERE.
THANKS, ANDY.
Unfortunately, something of a rarity in Gotham.
GLAD YOU CALLED ME FIRST.
THIS COULD REALLY TURN INTO A MEDIA CIRCUS. DO ME ANOTHER FAVOR...
...TAKE YOUR PARTNER AND PATROL THE EDGE OF OUR CRIME SCENE. MAKE SURE THE PERIMETER'S FREE OF ANY GAWKERS.
GCPD
GIVE ME A FEW MINUTES ALONE HERE.
BUT... SIR.
SHOULDN'T WE BE CALLING THE FORENSICS GUYS?
IN A BIT. JUST GIVE ME A FEW, OKAY?
What the hell is happening to this city?
I try not to notice the details that add up to an answer I don't want to consider.

JIM.
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT?
He arrives, all black and real--no urban myth. And I think of how I spent the better part of the last year trying to uncover his secrets.
NO TRESPASSING
THANKS FOR COMING.
Now, I call him "friend."
PRETTY GRISLY MURDER. AND... UNUSUAL.
SHE WAS IN THE SEWER?
I think of Barbara and little James--alive only due to HIS selfless actions--safe and warm at home.
YEAH. THERE'S NO HEAD, SO WE'LL HAVE TO HOPE THE PRINTS TURN UP AN I.D.
THOSE LACERATIONS ON WHAT'S LEFT OF THE TORSO AND THIGH...
YES. BITE MARKS.
I try not to think of Sarah at all.

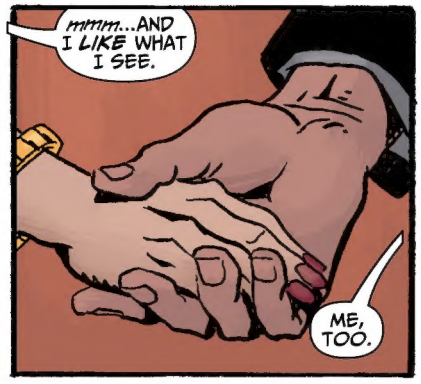
THE DIAMETER IS HUGE. SHE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MAULED BY SOME WILD ANIMAL.
NOTHING UNUSUAL REPORTED FROM THE LOCAL ZOO. NO CIRCUSES IN TOWN.
THERE'S HAIR AND BLOOD BENEATH HER NAILS.
PLENTY LEFT FOR YOUR TEAM.
YEAH. THANKS.
ANY IDEAS?
NOT YET.
I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN I DO.
I let him have first shot at it.
ALL RIGHT, BOYS.
TIME TO GET THE MEAT WAGON DOWN HERE.
Y-YES, SIR, CAPTAIN...
What kind of cop does that make me?
GENETIC MANIPULATION ISN'T THE HARD PART.
IT'S COAXING THAT ALTERED CODE INTO AN ALREADY LIVING ORGANISM.
ICING THE CAKE, AS IT WERE.

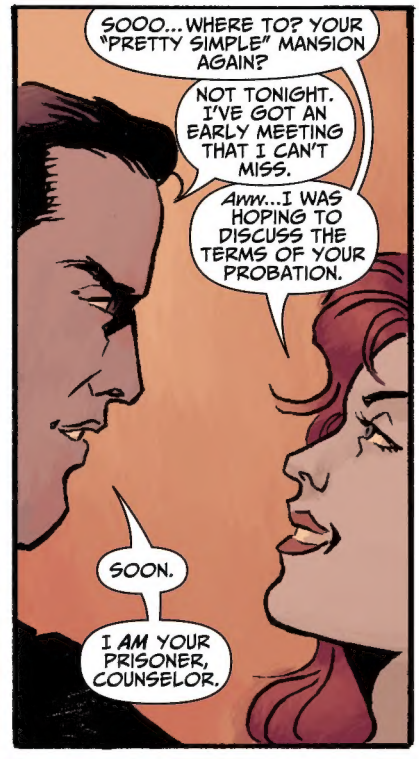
SO FAR, IT MUST BE TOLD, MY EFFORTS IN THIS VEIN HAVE BEEN...LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL.
FOR UNKNOWN REASONS, RADICAL MUTATION OCCURS AT THIS STAGE.
A FACT THAT DISTRESSES BUT HAS YET TO DETER ME.
EXCUSE ME, PROFESSOR?
WHAT IS IT?
I'M SORRY, PROFESSOR. THEY JUST--
EASE UP, BUM-BOY.
Y'SEE, WE JUST NEED TO HAVE A FEW WORDS WITH YER EMPLOYER...
...NICE-LIKE.
YOU ARE, I TAKE IT, ASSOCIATES OF SAL MARONI.
HEY, HEY! Y'SEE, CARLO? I TOLD YOU HE WAS A SMART GUY!
SMART ENOUGH TO PAY HIS DEBTS ON TIME.
AND KEEP HIS ARMS IN ONE PIECE.

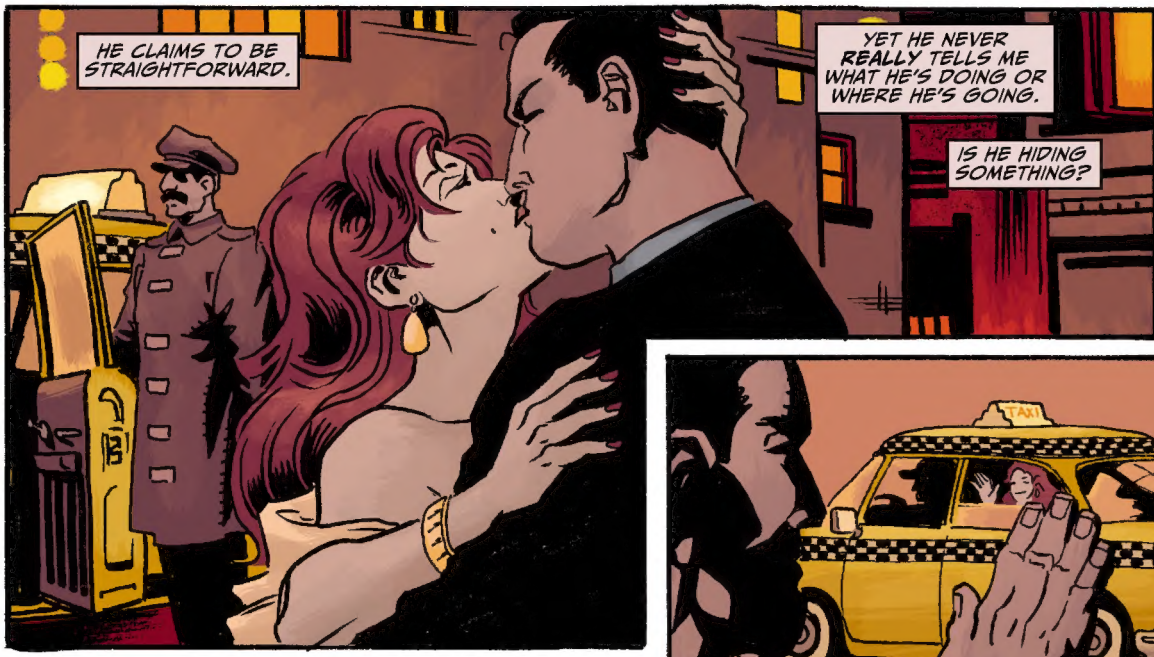

ADVICE YOU SEEM TO HAVE IGNORED.
Heh... OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD.
BUT THIS AIN'T ABOUT ME, COKE-BOTTLES.
NO SMOKING IN MY LAB.
A HEALTH NUT, TOO. Y'SEE, CARLO, THIS GUY'S A GENIUS!
WHICH MEANS YOU REMEMBER THAT WE EXPECT WEEKLY PAYMENTS OUTTA YOU.
SSSS
TURNS OUT, SAL RUNS A FLOATING POKER GAME NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE. WE'LL STOP BY AFTER THE GIG ON FRIDAY.
THAT GIVES YOU TWO DAYS, SMART GUY.
FOLLOW THEM, SANJAY. AN ILLEGAL GAMBLING DEN...
...WILL BE FLUSH WITH ILLICIT CASH. YES, PROFESSOR.
OKAY, SO MY HANDSOME PRINCE DOES HAVE ONE BIG SHORTCOMING...
...HE'S TERMINALLY LATE.

ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT.
GOD, I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I SAT AND WAITED FOR A MAN IN PUBLIC LIKE THIS.
I HOPE HE REALIZES HOW LUCKY HE IS.
I'LL GIVE HIM JUST TEN MORE--
HOPE I'M NOT IN TOO DEEP. SORRY...
WELLLL... THE JURY'S STILL OUT.
BUT NOW I'M HERE.
AND YOU'RE ALL WET! WAS THAT BOARD MEETING IN A POOL?
RAINING.
THE WINE LIST, SIR?
NO, THANK YOU. WATER'S FINE.
ANNND... DINING WITH GOTHAM'S LOVELIEST LAWYER-TO-BE.
FOR THAT, I WOULD HAVE BRAVED ANY ELEMENT!
OKAY... I GUESS WE'LL SUSPEND YOUR SENTENCE IN FAVOR OF SOME...
...COMMUNITY SERVICE!

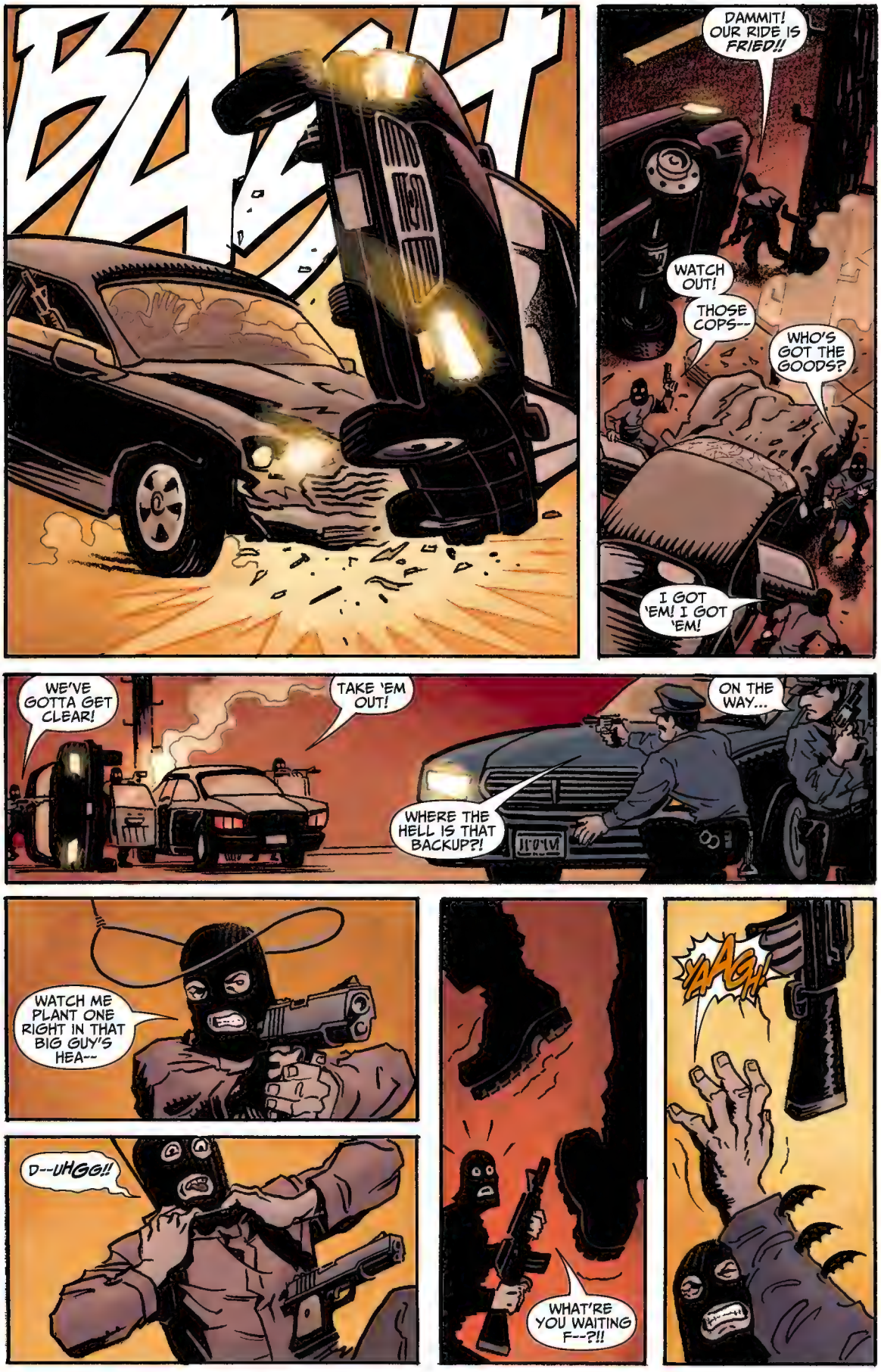
HIS EATING HABITS ARE ODD, TOO.
RARELY VEERS FROM STEAK AND VEGETABLES. NEVER--EVER--HAS DESSERT.
AN ATHLETE'S DIET.
SO, DADDY SAYS HE'D LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER.
SAYS HE WANTS TO SEE IF ALL THE RUMORS ABOUT YOU ARE TRUE!
NOT A ONE. I'M REALLY PRETTY SIMPLE AT HEART.
WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET.


mmm...AND I LIKE WHAT I SEE.
ME, TOO.


SOOO...WHERE TO? YOUR "PRETTY SIMPLE" MANSION AGAIN?
NOT TONIGHT. I'VE GOT AN EARLY MEETING THAT I CAN'T MISS.
Aww...I WAS HOPING TO DISCUSS THE TERMS OF YOUR PROBATION.
SOON.
I AM YOUR PRISONER, COUNSELOR.

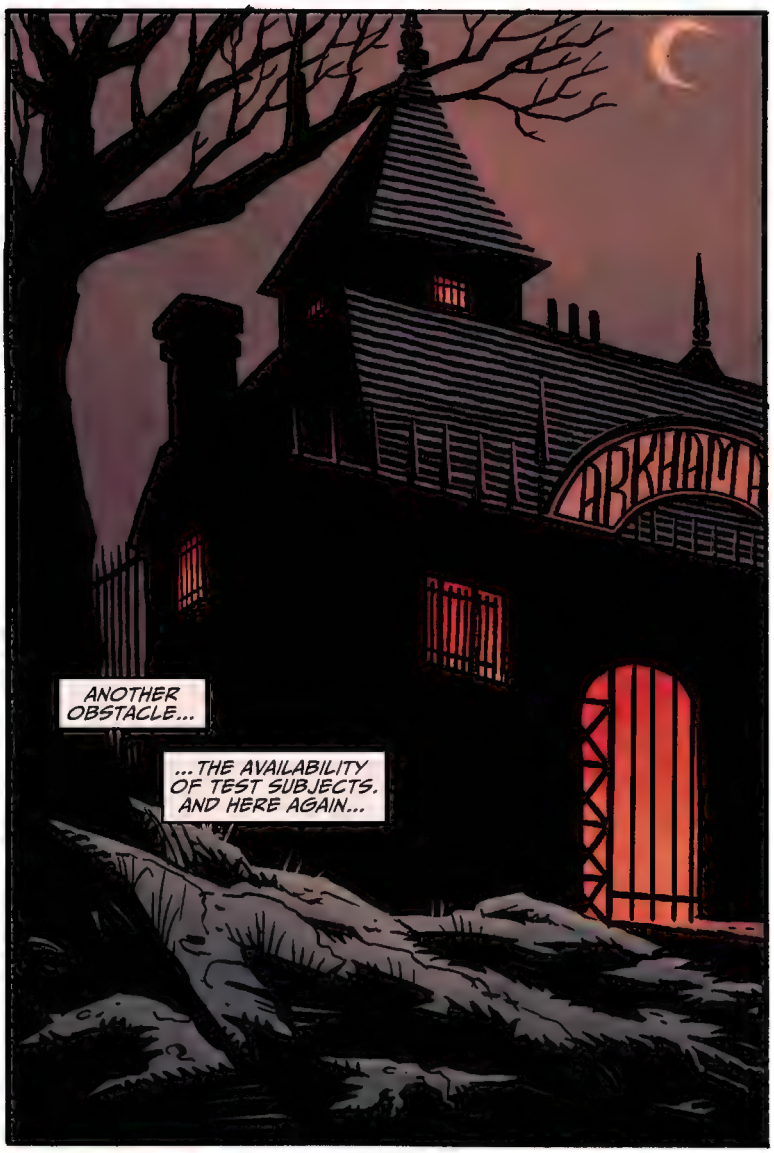

HE CLAIMS TO BE STRAIGHTFORWARD.
YET HE NEVER REALLY TELLS ME WHAT HE'S DOING OR WHERE HE'S GOING.
IS HE HIDING SOMETHING?
TAXI

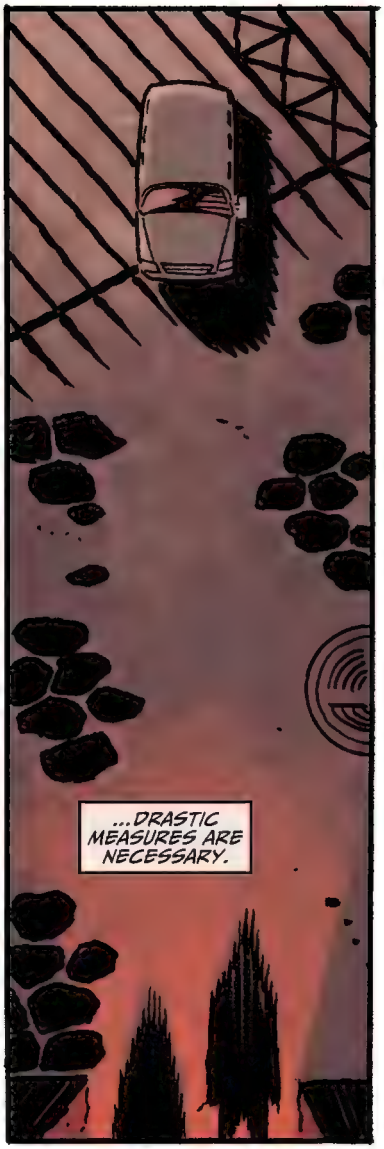
PERHAPS THE RUMORS ABOUT HIM ARE TRUE.
WHAT IF THERE'S ANOTHER WOMAN? OR SEVERAL?
NOW I'M BEING PARANOID.
--ARE THOSE SIRENS?
THIS CITY...
ALL UNITS, RESPOND! OFFICERS IN PURSUIT OF ROBBERY SUSPECTS!
JUST TURNING ONTO WEST 39TH!
Sharp Bros. FINE GEMS
REPEAT. ALL UNITS--
DAMMIT, THESE JERKS ARE GONNA HIT SOMEONE!
HOLD STEADY, MAN!
GIMME A CLEAR SHOT!
WATCH IT!
HOLEEE--
WHERE THE HELL DID--?!

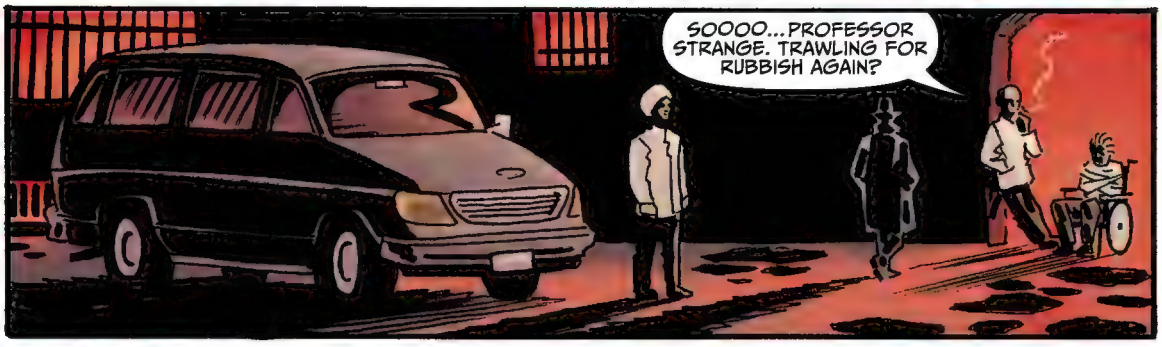

BAM!
DAMMIT! OUR RIDE IS FRIED!!
WATCH OUT!
THOSE COPS--
WHO'S GOT THE GOODS?
I GOT 'EM! I GOT 'EM!
WE'VE GOTTA GET CLEAR!
TAKE 'EM OUT!
ON THE WAY...
WHERE THE HELL IS THAT BACKUP?!
WATCH ME PLANT ONE RIGHT IN THAT BIG GUY'S HEA--
D--UHGG!!
WHAT'RE YOU WAITING F--?!!
YAAGH!

WHAT'S WRONG BACK TH--
WUMP
...TH-TH-THERE?
HOLEE--
GNK
TSHT--

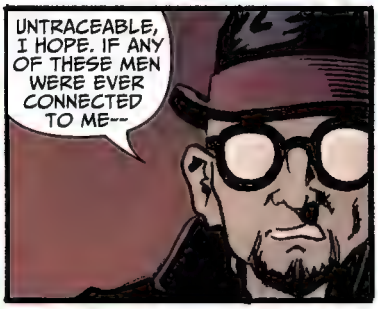
J-JERRY? B-BOBBY?
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON--?
AGGK--
DAMN...
BASTARD...
GET...
YOU--
KRAK
BATMAN!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! I'LL SH--
EASE UP THERE, PARTNER.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HE'S A WANTED FELON! THERE'S A STANDING WARRANT OUT ON HIM! COMMISSIONER GROGAN--
COMMISSIONER GROGAN ISN'T HERE.
AND THAT "WANTED FELON" JUST TOOK OUT FOUR HEAVILY ARMED, HOPPED-UP DIRT-BAGS WITHOUT A SINGLE SHOT BEING FIRED.
I SAY LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY. NOW, C'MON...
...LET'S GO SEE WHAT HE'S LEFT FOR US.


ANOTHER OBSTACLE...
...THE AVAILABILITY OF TEST SUBJECTS. AND HERE AGAIN...

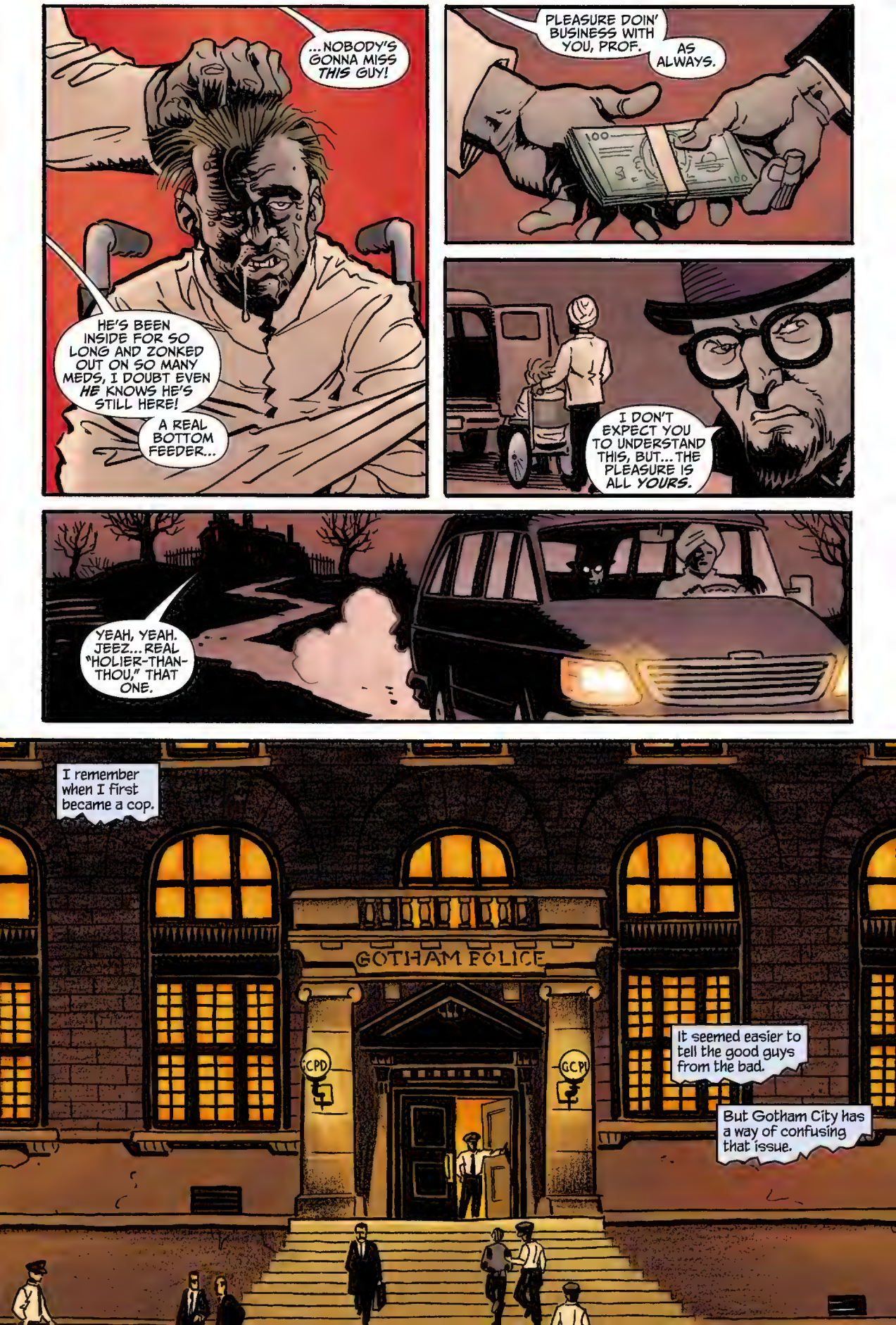

...DRASTIC MEASURES ARE NECESSARY.

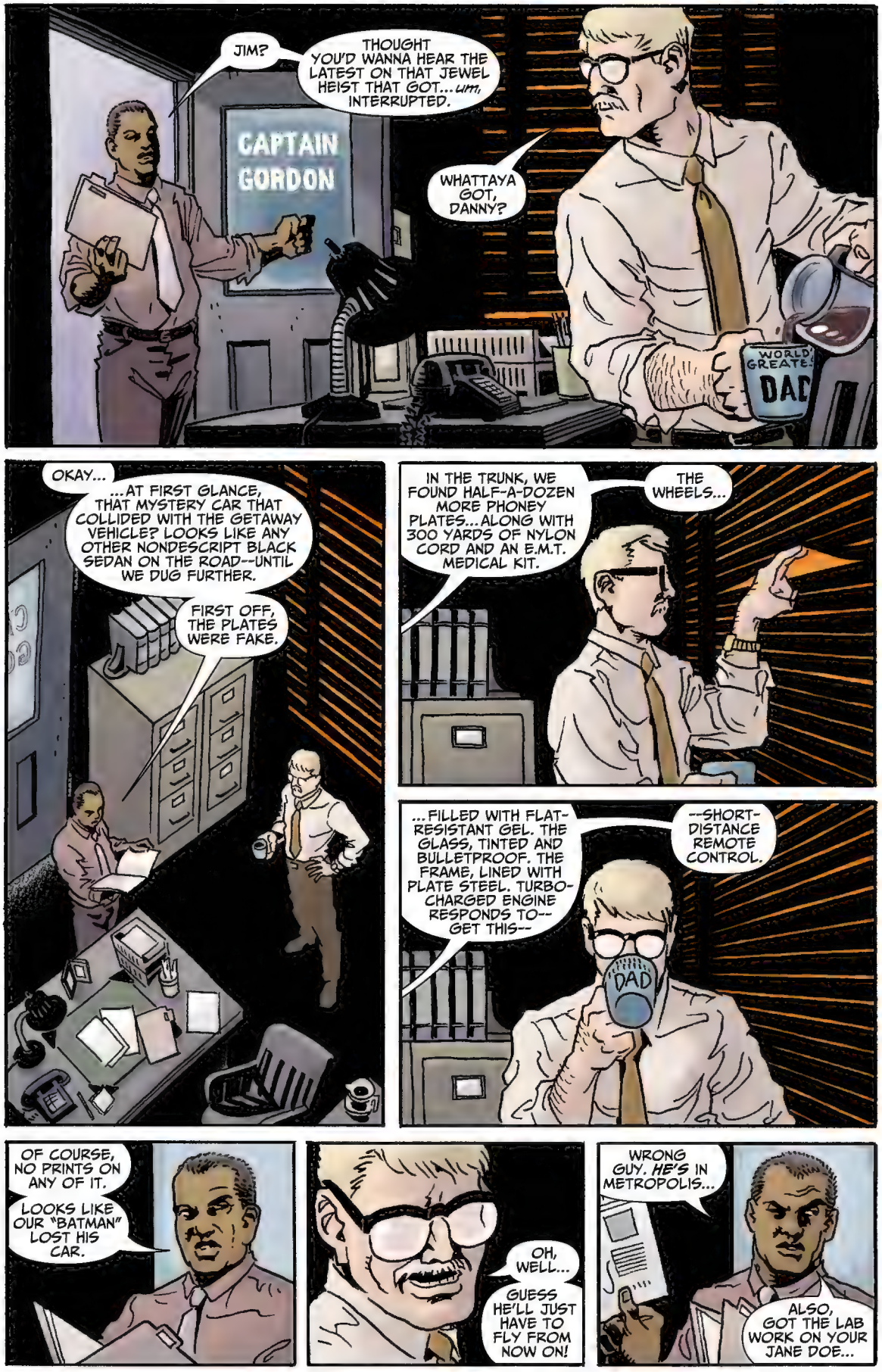

SOOOO...PROFESSOR STRANGE. TRAWLING FOR RUBBISH AGAIN?

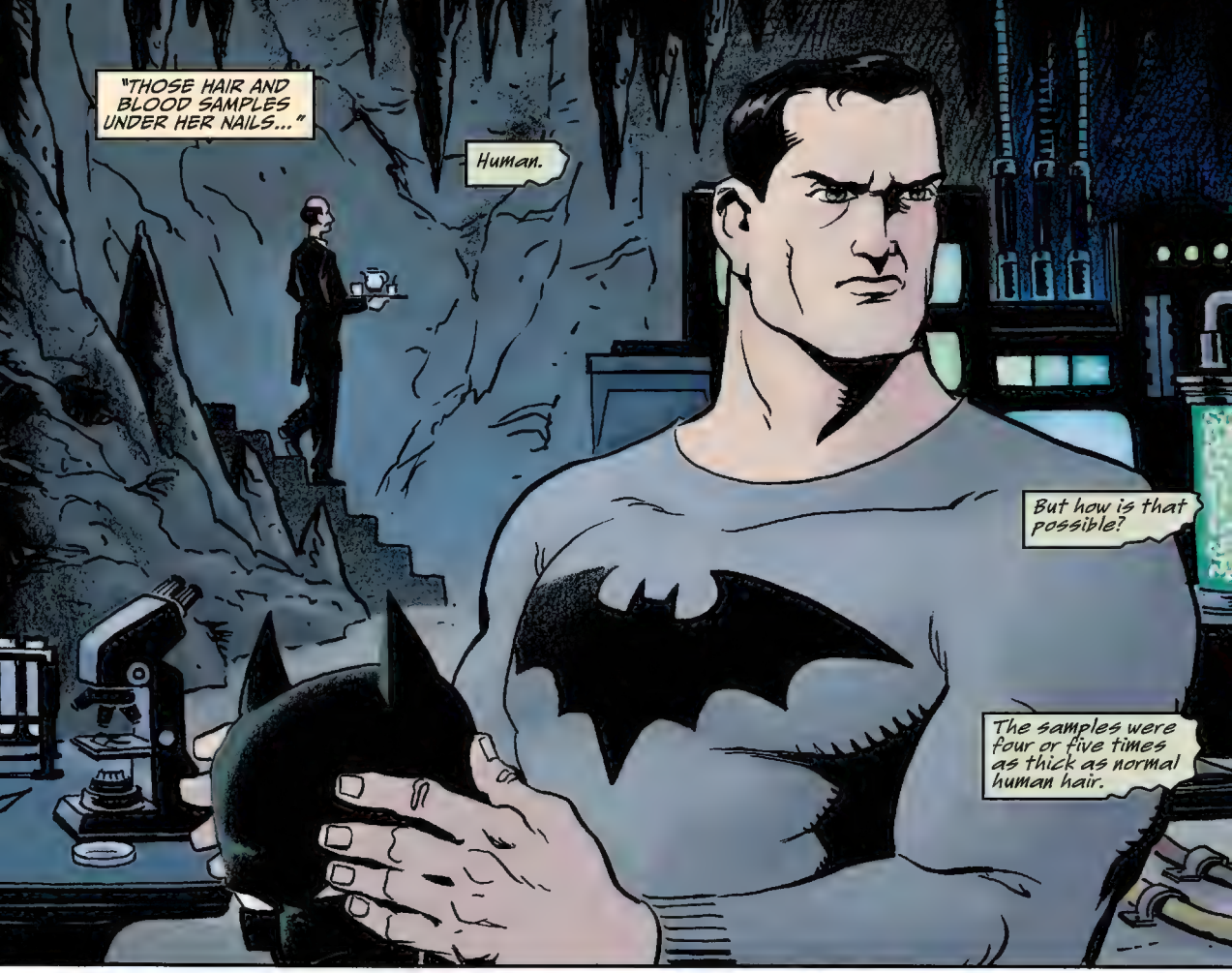
WELL, YOU CAME TO THE RIGHT PLACE!
GOT A RIPE ONE FOR YA TONIGHT.

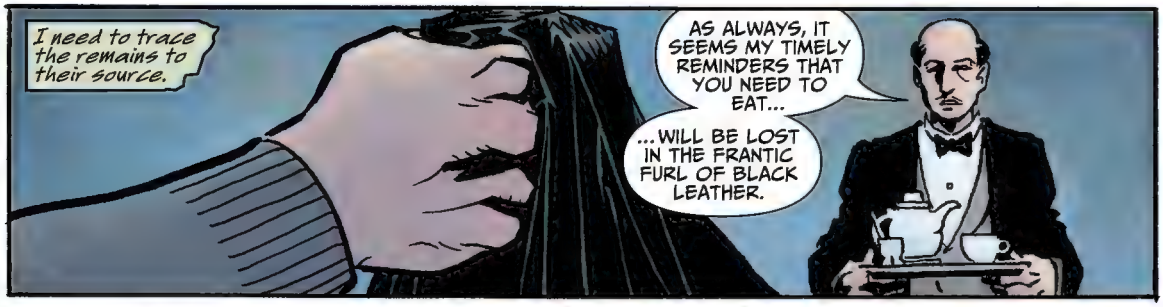

UNTRACEABLE, I HOPE. IF ANY OF THESE MEN WERE EVER CONNECTED TO ME--

DON'T GET YOUR PANTIES TIGHT. YOU'LL SEE...

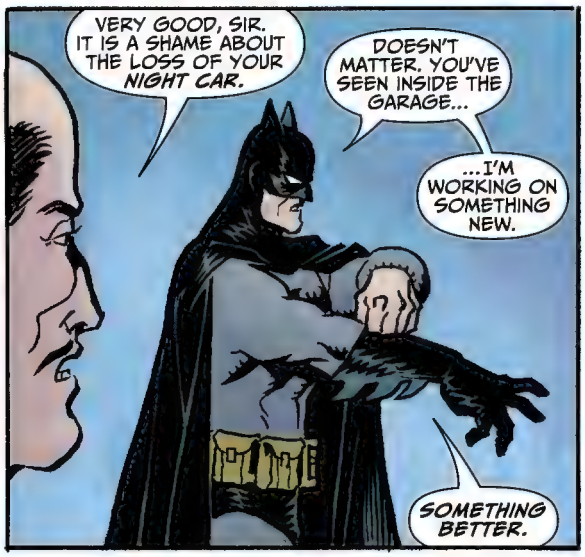

...NOBODY'S GONNA MISS THIS GUY!
HE'S BEEN INSIDE FOR SO LONG AND ZONKED OUT ON SO MANY MEDS, I DOUBT EVEN HE KNOWS HE'S STILL HERE!
A REAL BOTTOM FEEDER...
PLEASURE DOIN' BUSINESS WITH YOU, PROF.
AS ALWAYS.
I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND THIS, BUT... THE PLEASURE IS ALL YOURS.
YEAH, YEAH. JEEZ... REAL "HOLIER-THAN-THOU," THAT ONE.
I remember when I first became a cop.
GOTHAM POLICE
GCPD
GCPD
It seemed easier to tell the good guys from the bad.
But Gotham City has a way of confusing that issue.


JIM?
THOUGHT YOU'D WANNA HEAR THE LATEST ON THAT JEWEL HEIST THAT GOT... um, INTERRUPTED.
CAPTAIN GORDON
WHATTAYA GOT, DANNY?
WORLD'S GREATEST DAD
OKAY...
...AT FIRST GLANCE, THAT MYSTERY CAR THAT COLLIDED WITH THE GETAWAY VEHICLE? LOOKS LIKE ANY OTHER NONDESCRIPT BLACK SEDAN ON THE ROAD--UNTIL WE DUG FURTHER.
FIRST OFF, THE PLATES WERE FAKE.
IN THE TRUNK, WE FOUND HALF-A-DOZEN MORE PHONEY PLATES... ALONG WITH 300 YARDS OF NYLON CORD AND AN E.M.T. MEDICAL KIT.
THE WHEELS...
...FILLED WITH FLAT-RESISTANT GEL. THE GLASS, TINTED AND BULLETPROOF. THE FRAME, LINED WITH PLATE STEEL. TURBO-CHARGED ENGINE RESPONDS TO-- GET THIS--
--SHORT-DISTANCE REMOTE CONTROL.
DAD
OF COURSE, NO PRINTS ON ANY OF IT.
LOOKS LIKE OUR "BATMAN" LOST HIS CAR.
OH, WELL...
GUESS HE'LL JUST HAVE TO FLY FROM NOW ON!
WRONG GUY. HE'S IN METROPOLIS...
ALSO, GOT THE LAB WORK ON YOUR JANE DOE...


"THOSE HAIR AND BLOOD SAMPLES UNDER HER NAILS..."
Human.
But how is that possible?
The samples were four or five times as thick as normal human hair.


I need to trace the remains to their source.
AS ALWAYS, IT SEEMS MY TIMELY REMINDERS THAT YOU NEED TO EAT...
...WILL BE LOST IN THE FRANTIC FURL OF BLACK LEATHER.

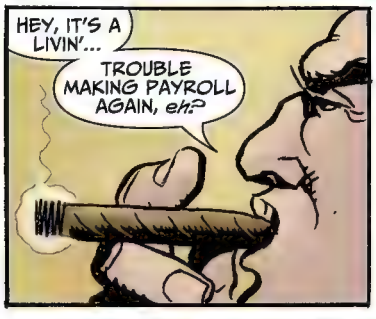
SORRY, ALFRED.
I NEED TO FOLLOW-UP A TRAIL BEFORE IT GOES COLD.
I'LL EAT LATER. I PROMISE.

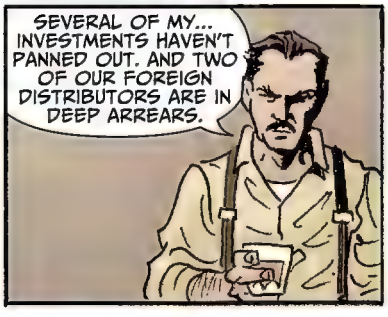

VERY GOOD, SIR. IT IS A SHAME ABOUT THE LOSS OF YOUR NIGHT CAR.
DOESN'T MATTER. YOU'VE SEEN INSIDE THE GARAGE...
...I'M WORKING ON SOMETHING NEW.
SOMETHING BETTER.

I BUILT UP MADISON INDUSTRIES FROM A SINGLE OFFICE AND A SINGLE SECRETARY.
I NOW EMPLOY NEARLY TWO THOUSAND OF GOTHAM'S HARD-WORKING CITIZENS.
A RESPONSIBILITY I TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY.
SO, NORMAN, WHY AM I HERE TONIGHT?

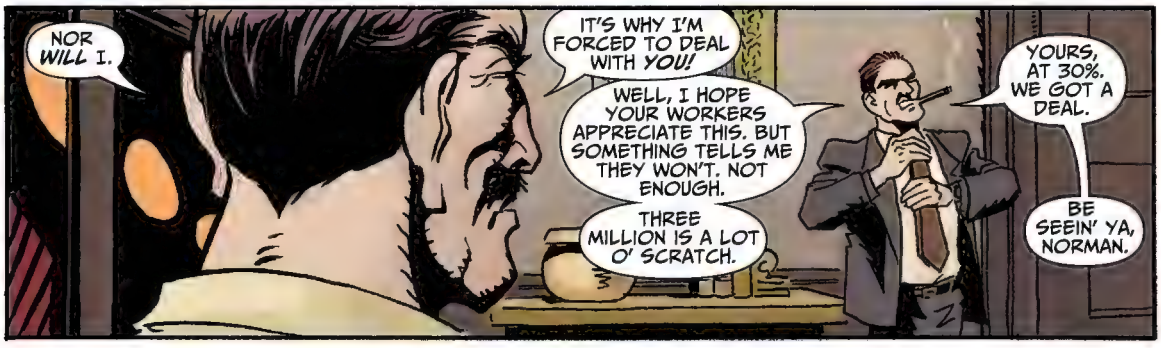
DON'T PLAY COY WITH ME, MARONI.
THERE'S ONLY ONE REASON I'D HAVE ANY USE FOR YOU.

OH, I KNOW THE PURPOSE OF MY VISIT, MY FRIEND.
I WANNA KNOW WHY YOU'D HAVE NEED OF MY SERVICES-- AGAIN!
YOU'RE A CRUEL MAN, YOU KNOW THAT?

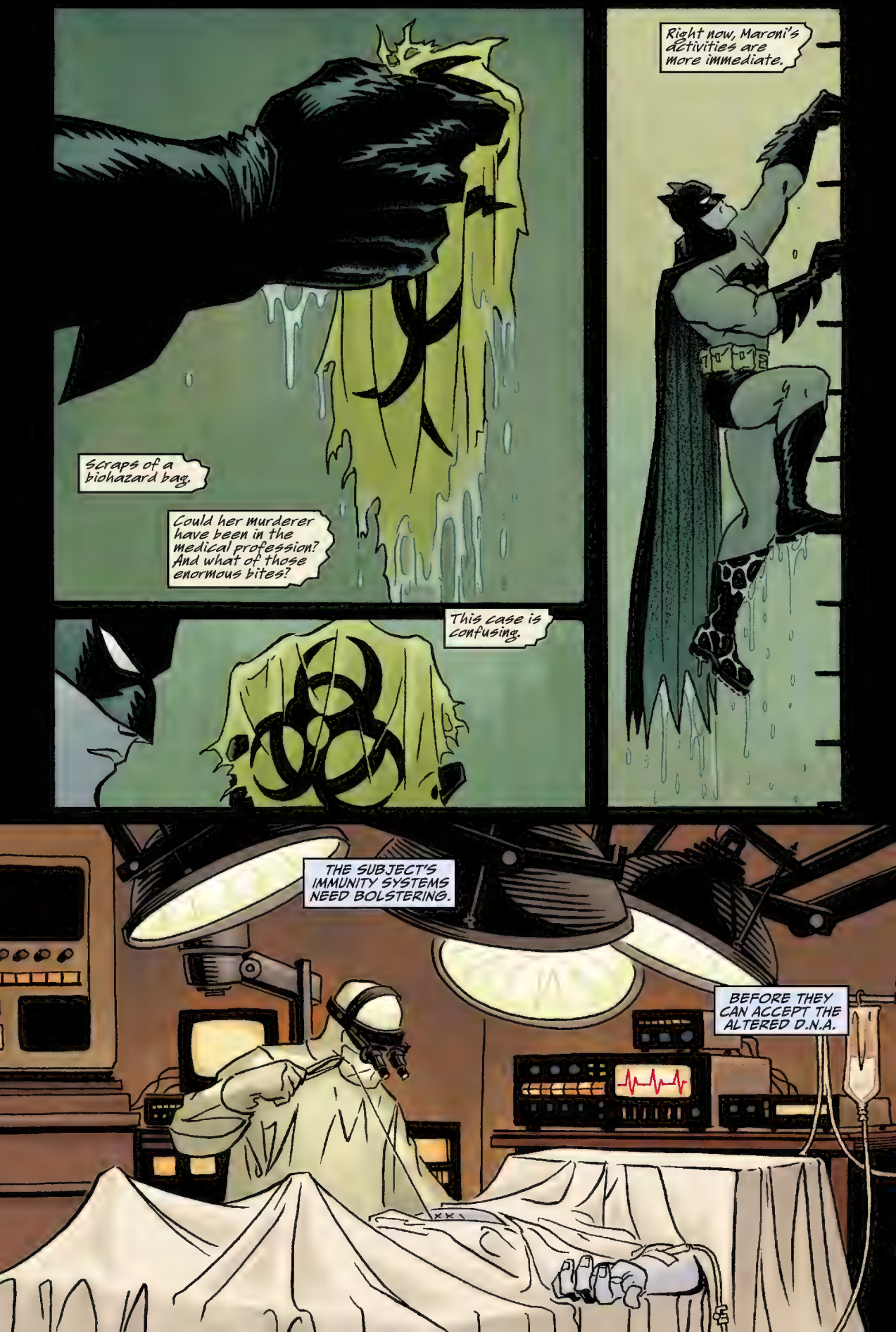

HEY, IT'S A LIVIN'...
TROUBLE MAKING PAYROLL AGAIN, eh?


SEVERAL OF MY... INVESTMENTS HAVEN'T PANNED OUT. AND TWO OF OUR FOREIGN DISTRIBUTORS ARE IN DEEP ARREARS.

TRAGIC.
YOU DUG INTO THEIR RETIREMENT FUNDS YET?


NOR WILL I.
IT'S WHY I'M FORCED TO DEAL WITH YOU!
WELL, I HOPE YOUR WORKERS APPRECIATE THIS. BUT SOMETHING TELLS ME THEY WON'T. NOT ENOUGH.
THREE MILLION IS A LOT O' SCRATCH.
YOURS, AT 30%. WE GOT A DEAL.
BE SEEIN' YA, NORMAN.

DADDY?
WERE YOU *sniff* SMOKING IN HERE?
OH, JULIE... YOU'RE HOME!
NO, MY DEAR. I HAD A... VISITOR WHOSE MANNERS LEAVE A BIT TO BE DESIRED.
BUT WHY ARE YOU HERE, DEAR? I THOUGHT YOU HAD A DATE THIS EVENING...
BRUCE HAD ANOTHER COMMITMENT. WE CALLED IT AN EARLY NIGHT.
"ANOTHER COMMITMENT," eh?
TELL ME, DEAR... DO YOU *TRUST* THIS MAN?
I MEAN, HIS REPUTATION...
I KNOW, DADDY!
I *WANT* TO TRUST HIM. *sigh* BUT THERE *ARE* TIMES, I MUST ADMIT...
"...I FEEL I BARELY KNOW HIM."
Tracking upstream from where the remains were uncovered...


Scraps of a biohazard bag.
Could her murderer have been in the medical profession? And what of those enormous bites?
This case is confusing.
Right now, Maroni's activities are more immediate.
THE SUBJECT'S IMMUNITY SYSTEMS NEED BOLSTERING.
BEFORE THEY CAN ACCEPT THE ALTERED D.N.A.

A SMALL IMPLANT RELEASES NECESSARY STIMULATORS .
SWEET REASON, LET THIS BE THE ONE THAT SUCCEEDS.
PROFESSOR, I HAVE LOCATED THE GANGSTER'S GAMBLING HOUSE. THERE IS A GAME IN PROGRESS NOW.
HOW MANY, TOTAL?
AROUND A DOZEN MEN. I'D SAY LESS THAN HALF ARE ARMED.
MORE THAN ENOUGH, YES, PROFESSOR.
hmph.
THEN I SAY ONLY ONE WILL BE SUFFICIENT. WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

KNOCK KNOCK
THAT'S THE CODE, KID. MUST BE RICHIE AND CARLO.
LET 'EM IN.
GENTLEMEN, THE FLOP...
YAWWWWN
WHAT THE HELL TIME IS IT?
TIME FOR YOU TO SIT YOUR ASS RIGHT WHERE IT IS.
YOU AIN'T TAKIN' OFF WITH THAT PILE O' CHIPS YET!

Y'SEE, CARLO? IT'S LIKE I TOLD YOU... SAL TAKES CARE OF HIS OWN.
LIKE THE OTHER NIGHT, HE HAD US OUTTA CUSTODY-- AND ALL CHARGES DROPPED--IN UNDER AN HOUR.
YEAH. heh--GUESS THAT "EYE" WITNESS DECIDED HE WANTED TO KEEP BOTH OF HIS!
WHAT THE HELL--?
YOU THINK IT'S THE COPS?
NOT LIKE THIS. COULD BE THAT BAT-CREEP!
MAN, WOULDN'T I JUST LOVE TO GET ANOTHER SHOT AT HIM?
RICHIE, I DUNNO...
MAYBE WE SHOULD WAIT AND CALL IN--
UNHHH...
PHP-
WHAT THE HELL YOU MOANIN' 'BOUT?
CARLO?
AW, CRAP--
THOK
GNNH!

UHHHH... MAN! HEAD FEELS LIKE A BOWLING PIN.
AND WHAT THE HELL IS THAT SMELL?!
WHAT THE--?!!
SNRGT--
RRRGHH!
XYAAAAGHH!!
TO BE CONTINUED